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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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### **American Soccer Envoys Build Bridges to Azerbaijani Youth and Coaches**

Two elite American soccer coaches will travel to Azerbaijan to conduct a series of football clinics for youth and Azerbaijani youth coaches, and will hold consultations with the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan from June 13-18. The coaches – 1999 Women’s World Cup Winner Cindy Parlow Cone and former Major League Soccer coach John Cone – have each played soccer at the professional level and are experienced youth development coaches.

The Soccer Envoys’ visit is sponsored by the United States Embassy in Baku, the Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and Sports United, in conjunction with the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) and regional Ministry of Youth and Sports officials. The goal of the visit is to work with Azerbaijani youth and coaches on their soccer and coaching skills, share ideas for healthy living, and to place sports in the context of a well-balanced life that stresses the importance of education.

The pair will conduct a soccer skills clinic for both boys and girls in the Merdakan/Qala area on June 13. Among the participants will be students and teachers from refugee communities and attendees of a school built by the United States’ Office of Defense Cooperation in Qala. On June 14-15, they will be in Baku, where they will meet with AFFA officials, including Secretary General Elkhon Mammadov, conduct a skills clinic for girls, and conduct a clinic for 20 youth coaches from youth leagues and schools. On June 16-18, the Soccer Envoys will head to regions, visiting Samaxi, Xacmaz, and Quba, where they will conduct skills clinics for approximately 220 youth which will include mixed groups of boys and girls.

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